

FINAL

2021/22 OPERATIONAL PLAN

Midlands Biosecurity Group



FEBRUARY 25, 2021
MIDLANDS BIOSECURITY GROUP
Dandaragan Road, Dandaragan.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION..... | 2 |
| OBJECTIVES | 3 |
| HISTORY & BOARD MEMBERS | 3 |
| STAKEHOLDERS | 4 |
| FUNDING | 4 |
| PLANNED PROGRAMS 2021-22..... | 6 |
| COMMUNITY CONSULTATION TIMELINE..... | 8 |
| BAITING CALENDAR | 9 |
| COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY..... | 10 |

INTRODUCTION

The Midlands Biosecurity Group (MBG) will initiate, promote and foster the control of Declared Pests in the Midlands region.

MBG will assist land owners and managers to adopt sound biosecurity practices and provide members with a forum to exchange information, advice and assistance. The group has been established in response to the growing concerns of local farmers about the impact of wild dogs, foxes, feral pigs and rabbits on their farming operations and the need for a co-ordinated response to the issue.

The Midlands Biosecurity Group was incorporated on the 19th of June, 2019 and continues to liaise with the community to raise awareness of the group, building on initial work conducted by the West Midlands Group that commenced in 2018.

By ensuring clear communication between all relevant stakeholders, the MBG will raise awareness of issues and ensure a multi-faceted approach to pest control. This will include Landholders, Local Government Authorities, State and Federal agencies, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions and relevant industry bodies.

The area supported by the MBG is seven local government areas and includes Dandaragan, Moora, Mingenew, Carnamah, Coorow, Three Springs and Irwin. This area covers 24,523 km² of which over 4003km² is managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.



The Midlands Biosecurity Group was formed with the administrative support of the West Midlands Group. The West Midlands Group is a well-established grower group with a track record of managing project funding and reporting to funding bodies appropriately. An ongoing partnership between the two groups will allow for continued effective administration and communications.

The group is exploring all options for future funding of the group's operational plan and is currently implementing its first operational plan in 2020/21, funded through a declared pest rate. The Declared Pest Rate allows for locally collected funds to be matched 1:1 with state government funding. These funds can only be spent in the group's specified and prescribed area of operation.

At the Group's Annual General Meeting held on the 19th of October 2020, MBG members endorsed the groups 2021/22 Operational plan, including a total budget of \$390,000, which includes \$56,000 funding from the Sheep & Goat Industry Funding Scheme. Since that meeting, three additional projects have been confirmed for FY22 including \$25,000 from the Wild Dog action plan and \$30,000 from AWI for training. The final budget for FY22 is \$445,000.

The MBG Board of Management then moved to request the implementation of a Declared Pest Rate as follows:

The Midlands Biosecurity Group recommends that the Minister of Agriculture and Food (as per legislation) determines an Ad Valorem rate for the financial year commencing 1 July 2021, on the unimproved land value, on land in the local government areas of Irwin, Three Springs, Mingenew, Carnamah, Coorow, Moora and Dandaragan that is:

- a) *freehold land,*
- b) *a minimum 100 hectares,*
- c) *with a minimum \$100 per VEN*
- d) *to a budget of \$167,000*

This operational plan identifies how the funds will be spent. This system will provide our communities with guaranteed annual funds and sustainability to address priority declared pests using current best practice management techniques.

This operational plan details the organisation's activities including the budget considerations. The plan promotes integrated vertebrate pest control by promoting and providing support for control of foxes, wild dogs, feral pigs and rabbits. The plan also links to the MBG Wild Dog management plan and Midwest Feral Pig Management strategies. These management plans aim to reduce to risks to agricultural production from the impacts of wild dog and feral pig activity through education, co-ordination and on-ground best practice control.

OBJECTIVES

The objects and purposes of the Midlands Biosecurity Group as described in the group's constitution are to:

- initiate, promote and foster the control of Declared Pests under section 165 of the BAM act in the Designated Area;
- encourage landholders and other persons to adopt sound biosecurity practices throughout the Designated Area;
- foster the sustainable development of the Designated Area;
- encourage the control of pests other than Declared Pests in the Designated Area;
- identify direct or indirect funding sources that can be made available for the development of the objects and purposes of the Association;
- provide Members with a forum to exchange information, advice and assistance where appropriate; and
- undertake any activity that the Board of Management shall from time to time determine to be in furtherance of the objects of the Association

HISTORY & BOARD MEMBERS

The decision to form a Biosecurity Group was made in December 2018 by local farmers and industry due to concerns around increasing numbers of Wild Dogs and Feral Pigs. The Interim Board had farmer representatives from throughout the region and regular meetings were held to start the RBG process and define the future objectives of the MBG. On the 6th of December 2019, the MBG members elected its first official Board of Management at its inaugural Annual General Meeting. Board member terms are 3 three years, with retirement dates staggered at the first AGM to ensure continuity of board members. The current MBG board members are listed below.

| Board Director | Role | Shires Farming |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Callum Scott | Board Director | Carnamah |
| 2. Peter Summers | Board Director | Irwin |
| 3. Charles Wass | Chairperson | Coorow |
| 4. Christine Brown | Board Director | Moora, Dandaragan |
| 5. Carl Forward | Board Director | Irwin, Mingenew |
| 6. Chris Patmore | Board Director | Irwin, Three Springs |
| 7. Will Browne | Board Director | Coorow |
| 8. Maria Griffiths | Deputy Chairperson | Mingenew, Dandaragan |
| 9. Geoff Hortin | Board Director | Three Springs, Carnamah, Coorow |
| 10. Chris O'Callaghan | Board Director (Non-voting) | MBG Co-ordinator |

STAKEHOLDERS

Identified stakeholders of the MBG include, but are not limited to:

- Local Landholders in the Shires of Moora, Dandaragan Coorow, Carnamah, Three Springs, Mingenew and Irwin.
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (formerly DAFWA)
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (formerly DPAW)
- Shire of Moora, Dandaragan, Coorow, Carnamah, Three Springs, Mingenew, Irwin.
- State Natural Resource Management Program
- Northern Agricultural Catchment Council
- Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management
- Adjacent Shires (Gingin, Chittering, Victoria Plains)
- Australian Wool Innovation Limited
- Meat and Livestock Australia
- Livestock firms (Elders, Landmark, Primaries)
- Adjacent Recognised Biosecurity Groups (Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association, Northern Biosecurity Group)
- Iluka Resources
- Tronox Ltd.

FUNDING

The Midlands Biosecurity Group has attracted funding from a number of different sources, these are:

Past Funding:

Australian Wool Innovation: 2019 Wild Dog Funding. \$34,000 over 6 months. This funding provided a contribution to the West Midlands Group Wild Dog control program. Finished June 2019.

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development: Development of Midlands Biosecurity Group for Recognition. \$100,000 over 18 months. The purpose of this grant is to contribute to a large-scale, multi-tenure response to declared pests and includes, Biosecurity Group support, communications, capacity building, research and monitoring and evaluation. Finished June 2020.

Sheep and Goat Industry Funding Scheme: Wild dog eradication Grant. \$168,000 over three years. The purpose of this grant is to ensure landholders are well-supported in their wild dog control efforts, through co-ordination with neighbouring landholders, and other stakeholders such as local

government and the state departments of Biodiversity, Conservations and Attractions and Primary Industries and Regional Development. Finishes June 2022.

National Drought Funding: Wild dog action plan. \$250,000 over 1 year. The purpose of this funding is to provide enhanced wild dog operations in the shires of Gingin, Victoria Plains, Lower Chittering, Moora, Dandaragan, Coorow and Carnamah, preventing further establishment in areas to the south. Finishes Oct 2020.

WA Wild Dog Action Plan Funding: Wild Dog Funding. \$25,000 over 12 months. Funding is a state government contribution to Wild Dog management in the Midlands Region. Funds LPMT time. Finishes June 2021.

Current Funding

Australian Wool Innovation: In December 2020, AWI committed \$38000 to the group to complete landholder training activities for vertebrate pests.

Sheep and Goat Industry Funding Scheme: Wild dog eradication Grant. \$168,000 over three years. The purpose of this grant is to ensure landholders are well-supported in their wild dog control efforts, through co-ordination with neighbouring landholders, and other stakeholders such as local government and the state departments of Biodiversity, Conservations and Attractions and Primary Industries and Regional Development. Finishes June 2022.

WA Wild Dog Action Plan Funding: Wild Dog Funding. \$25,000 over 12 months. Funding is a state government contribution to Wild Dog management in the Midlands Region. Funds LPMT time. Finishes June 2022.

PLANNED PROGRAMS 2021-22

| Program 1 Wild Dogs & Foxes | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Actions</i> | <i>Input</i> | <i>Activity</i> |
| Bait Rack Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LPMT Time - Dried Meat Baits - Restricted Chemical Permits - 1080 - Strychnine - Signage - Traps | 2 Bait Rack activities per year in 6 Hotspot areas of the Midlands. |
| LPMT Contract | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LPMT Contract | 240 Contract days worked (total including IFS+WDAP). |
| TOTAL | | 174,000 |

| Program 2 Feral Pigs | | |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Action</i> | <i>Input</i> | <i>Activity</i> |
| Co-ordinated Integrated Feral Pig Control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LPMT Time - Grain - Poison - Cameras - Signs - Restricted Chemical Permits - Aerial Shoot | Pig poisoning program LPMT support for farmers |
| Co-ordination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-ordination costs for feral pig control. | |
| TOTAL | | \$117,000 |

| Program 3 Rabbits | | |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Action</i> | <i>Input</i> | <i>Activity</i> |
| Community Rabbit Baiting Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LPMT Time - Grain - Poison - Baiting Trailer - Restricted Chemical Permits - LPMT time | Bait mixing program LPMT Support |
| TOTAL | | \$13,000 |

| Program 4 Community Engagement | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Action</i> | <i>Input</i> | <i>Activity</i> |
| Community Consultation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting and Field Day attendance - Brochure - Social Media - Print Media - Website - Newspapers - Mail Out | <p>Communication outcomes across multiple channels.</p> <p>Landholders informed about current regulations and training provided to assist with compliance.</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Landholder Training Program (AWI Training Grant) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Podcast & Video production - Workshops | Workshops, training kits, latest pest management control tools promoted. |
| TOTAL | | \$36,000 |

| Program 5 Governance & Administration | | |
|--|---|---|
| <i>Activity</i> | <i>Input</i> | <i>Activity</i> |
| Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive Officer (0.5FTE) + On Costs. - Comms officer | Executive Officer and Communications officer employed. |
| Administration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IT - Insurance - Travel - Office Space - Data Management - Reporting & Auditing Costs - Meeting costs - Staff Professional Development | Administrative duties completed to ensure compliance requirements are met and programs are delivered effectively. |
| Contingency | Contingency for non payment of DPR ~\$20,000 | |
| TOTAL | | \$105,000 |

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION TIMELINE

| Month | Planned Activity | Medium | Purpose |
|----------------|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| February 2021 | RCP & Pest Control Workshops | Workshop | Consultation & Inform |
| | Feral Pig Control Information | Social Media, Local Papers | Inform |
| | Rabbit Control Information | Social Media, Local Papers | Inform |
| | Information for Domestic Dog Owners | Local Papers | Inform |
| March 2021 | Wild Dog/Fox Bait Rack Days | Bait Rack workshops | Participation |
| | Letter to Midlands Region Ratepayers (Operational Plan) | Mail Out | Inform |
| | Local Farmer Q&A | Local Papers, Enews | Inform |
| | MBG Update | Local Papers | |
| April 2021 | Wild Dog/Fox Control Information | Social Media, Local Paper | Inform |
| May 2021 | MBG Update | Local Papers | Inform |
| | DPR Information | Local Papers | Inform |
| June 2021 | Wild Dog/Fox Control Information | Social Media, Local Papers, MBG Enews | Inform |
| July 2021 | Wild Dog/Fox Control Information | MBG Enews, Local Paper | Inform |
| | MBG Update | Press Release, Local News | Inform |
| August 2021 | Mingenew Expo | Presence, Brochures | Consultation & Inform |
| | Dowerin Field Day | Presence, Brochures | Consultation & Inform |
| | DPR Information | Local Papers | Inform |
| September 2021 | Community Wild Dog/Fox Bait Rack Days | Local Papers, MBG Enews, Social Media | Participation |

| | | | |
|---------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| | Grower Group Spring Field Day's | Presence, Brochure, Demonstration | Inform |
| | MBG Annual General Meeting | Email to Members, Local Papers | Inform |
| October 2021 | MBG Annual General Meeting | Local Papers, MBG Enews, Social Media | Consultation & Inform |
| | Rabbit Control Information | Local Papers | Inform |
| December 2021 | Rabbit Control Information | Local Papers | Inform |
| | Feral Pig Control Information | Local Papers | Inform |
| | DPR Information | Local Papers | Inform |
| November 2021 | Rabbit Control Information | Local Papers | Inform |
| | MBG Activities Update | Local Papers | Inform |
| February 2022 | Community Rabbit Baiting Program | Local Papers, MBG Enews, Social Media | Participation |
| March 2022 | Community Feral Pig Control Program | Local Papers, MBG Enews, Social Media, | Participation |
| | MBG Update | Enews | Inform |
| | Local Paper Update | Local Papers | Inform |
| | Letter to Midlands Region Ratepayers (Operational Plan) | Mail Out | Inform |
| April 2022 | Community Wild Dog Bait Rack program | Local Papers, MBG Enews, Social Media | Participation Consultation & Inform |
| | DPR Information | Local Papers | |
| June 2022 | MBG Enews Update | MBG Enews | Inform |
| | Local Paper Update | Local Papers | Inform |

BAITING CALENDAR

| JAN | FEB | MARCH | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|--------|-----------|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------|-----|-----|-----|
| | Rabbit | Feral Pig | Wild Dog/Fox | | | | | Wild Dog/Fox | | | |

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

| Goal | Timing | Detail | Who |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|------------|
| Regular column in local papers/e-news | July, September, October, February, March, June | Papers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badgingarra Sandpaper • Dandaragan Redgum • Coorow Squawk • Northern Valleys News • On the Mat Carnamah and Eneabba • Craytales Jurien Bay • Leeman/Greenhead Snag Island News • Three Springs Yakabout • Moora Herald • Mingenew Matters • Dongara-Denison Local Rag • Watheroo Wag Tails | Comms + EO |
| Regular E-News Update | July, September, October, February, March, June | Local paper content to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Baiting Day information • Activities updates • Restricted Chemical Permits • Latest Information/Research • Declared Pest Rate | Comms + EO |
| Mail Out | March | Operational Plan & Group update. | Comms + EO |
| MBG card (digital + printed) | | What and where to report sightings. For WMG staff and MBG Board to distribute as needed. | Comms + EO |
| Twitter Handle | Regular Posts with latest information & activities | See @midlands_group | Comms |
| Facebook Page | Regular Posts with latest information & activities | Search Midlands Biosecurity Group | Comms |

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|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Presentations to Local Government as required/requested | Ongoing | Provision of updates and progress of the group. | EO + DPIRD support |
| Community Baiting Day(s) | February, March, April September | Conducted at known feral pest hotspots. | EO, Dogger co-ordinator, LPMT's, Board |
| MBG Website/Webpage update | July | Content added as received. DPR information, operational plans, contact details etc. | Comms |
| Board Members Communication | Ongoing | Board member are key communicators in the designated area. Inform the community of group activities | Board |
| Landholder Training | As requested | Training to complete RCPs, improve control strategies, governance, provide feedback to researchers. | EO |
| Brochure | August | Update MBG brochure annually to ensure information stays relevant and catchy | EO + Comms. |
| Flyer | September | Flyer developed for community notice boards. | Comms |
| Identification of Key Stakeholders | On going | Identify and inform key stakeholders of group activities. Collaborate where appropriate with other groups including Mingenew-Irwin group, Liebe Group, NACC, DBCA, WA Police. | |

